

This is a delightful book to read. It is well written, and so well translated that only once did one realize that it had not been written originally in English. The fact that the translator is also an authority on porphyrins has added much to the up-to-dateness of the book, as the various translator's footnotes indicate. The only criticism is the brevity of the index. To balance this, there is a very complete bibliography for each chapter, collected together at the end of the book.

Ancient Therapeutic Arts. By William Brockbank, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 162; illustrated. 25s.) London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1954.

This volume, one of the publishers' series of books on Medical History, publishes in book form the Fitzpatrick Lectures delivered by the author at the Royal College of Physicians in 1950-51. There are four lectures, described on the contents page as dealing with the Ancient Arts of Enema Administration, Cupping and Leeching and Counter-irritation, and The Less Ancient Art of Intravenous Injection of Drugs.

These essays make fascinating reading. The first of Enema Administration traces the history of this therapeutic art from the earliest known reference in the Ebers papyrus about 1500 B.C. to modern times. So continuous and so universal has been the practice of this art through the centuries that references to and quotations from the works of many of the great names in medical history appear in the text—Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, the great Arabian physicians, the mediæval Europeans including our own John of Arderne in the fourteenth century, Ambroise Paré, de Graaf and many in more modern times in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The author describes fully the many purposes to which the enema has been put and the very varied ingredients, from the honey and oil and butter of the earliest times to strange mixtures, and even tobacco smoke enemata were used to resuscitate persons apparently drowned down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The different forms of apparatus used for the administration of the enema are fully described and lavishly illustrated by the reproduction of original illustrations from the Middle Ages onwards. The enema in literature is dealt with by quotations from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and particularly from Molière, who "by his ridicule made the enema a fashionable procedure and a matter of general conversation"; while the enema in art is exemplified by the reproduction of a painting by Jan Steen and by cartoons by Rowlandson.

The lectures on the Arts of Cupping and Leeching and Counter-irritation are of equal interest and reveal equally the scholarship of the author. Cupping and leeching and the various methods of counter-irritation described, setons, issues, the cautery, moxibustion, are all practices of great antiquity, most of which were in use till comparatively recent times. The author quotes from Sir Arthur Keith's autobiography an account of the successful cupping of a patient for acute lumbago, which he witnessed when he was a medical student, and refers to descriptions by two modern authors of their experiences and sensations on being cupped (both in France), the one for a sore throat and fever, the other for pneumonia. The reviewer recalls that when a student he found among the instruments in one of the theatre cupboards a cupping glass, a scarifier for wet cupping, and a cautery, which was called Corrigan's button, an exact replica of which is to be seen in a seventeenth-century illustration published in this volume.

So these ancient practices died hard and even to-day some, such as the art of cupping, are still practised, as the author points out, by primitive peoples. But the extent to which they were used and the number of different remedies that were applied even to one patient in one illness makes one shudder. Poor King Charles II, dying of uræmia, was subjected to bleeding, scarifying and cupping, purgation and enemata, blistering and the red hot cautery and sneezing powders, while "cephalic plasters, combined with spurge and Burgundy pitch, were applied to his feet". Poor Charles!

And so to the last essay on the Less Ancient Art of Intravenous Injection of Drugs. As the author points out Harvey's "*De Motu Cordis*" marked the beginning of intravenous medication and Sir Christopher Wren was the inventor of the method. The well-known early experiments in the transfusion of blood and later in the infusion of various and varied medicaments are graphically described by the author, who draws attention to the important milestone in the history of intravenous medication when in 1832 Thomas Latta, an Edinburgh Surgeon, recognizing that "a very great deficiency of the water and saline matter of blood" developed in cholera, and failing to compensate for the great loss of fluids by enemata of water and salt decided "to throw fluid immediately into the circulation" by the intravenous route. It is gratifying to read of the success which attended his efforts and surprising to learn of the amount of fluid which he gave—e.g. sixteen and a half pints in twelve hours and "twenty-four pints to a twenty-nine-year-old blacksmith with complete success".

The author is to be congratulated on his scholarly essays and thanked for making them available in book form, and our thanks and congratulations must also go to the publishers for their excellent production both of the typescript and the numerous illustrations.